

“SOLDIER”

I was that which others did not want to be.

I went where others feared to go, and did what others failed to do.

I asked nothing from those who gave nothing, and reluctantly accepted the thought of eternal loneliness ... should I fail.

I have seen the face of terror, felt the stinging cold of fear, and enjoyed the sweet taste of a moment's love.

I have cried, pained, and hoped ... but most of all, I have lived times others would say were best forgotten.

At least someday I will be able to say that I was proud of what I was ... a soldier.

George L. Skypeck

**By Sgt. Maj. of the Army (Retired) Julius W. Gates and
Command. Sg. Maj. (Retired) Jack Hardwick**

George L. Skypeck's words should ring loud with all United States Army officers and Noncommissioned officers leaders. The Soldier's Creed charges leaders to adhere and enforce its tenets. Army leaders must take the Soldiers Creed mandate seriously.

But why do Army leaders refer to Soldiers as “Joes, Grunts, Snuffy, Gun Bunnies, G.Is” and many other buzzwords that degrade the Soldier? Why do military-oriented media articles refer to Soldiers as Grunts, G.Is and other degrading buzzwords?

In our humble opinions, if anyone refers to our Soldiers as anything other than a Soldier it is a clear demonstration of poor leadership and lack of respect. Our Soldiers have earned the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

After volunteering to serve their Nation and completing their training, Soldiers (men and women), earn a title, “Soldier.” The title is not free; it must be earned. No one should degrade an American Soldier by referring to him or her as anything other than Soldier.

Thousands upon thousands of our brave young men and women — our Soldiers — have volunteered to lay their lives on the line in the defense of our Nation. They serve in combat in faraway countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan. As in the past, our Soldiers endure the burden and pure hells of war. As

we are well aware, many have become battle casualties. Many more will also. Many have and will make the supreme sacrifice. Our Soldiers give 100 percent and then some. Why can't we treat our men and women with dignity and respect by referring to them as Soldiers?

They are not Joes, Snuffy, Grunts, G.Is nor anything other than SOLDIERS!

Another point: Why does the United States Marines leadership,

officers and noncommissioned Officers, always refer to their Marines as Marines? The answer is very simple: Marine leaders demonstrate dignity and respect for their Marine comrades-in-arms and will not allow anyone to degrade their fellow Marines by allowing someone to refer to them by using some buzzword.

Fellow Americans, no matter what was done in the past for whatever reason, it is time to fix this problem. It is time for all United States Army leaders from the Army Chief of Staff, Sergeant Major of the Army to the newly commissioned Second Lieutenant, to the newly promoted sergeant and corporal, to demonstrate the proper respect and require everyone who serves in the ranks of our United States Army, to include the media, to respect our Nation's finest by addressing them by their earned title, “SOLDIER.”

Editor's Note: Sgt. Maj. of the Army (Retired), Julius W. (Bill) Gates served his Nation as a Soldier during war and peace for more than three decades. He currently serves as the United States Army Research Institute, liaison officer with the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, La. Command Sgt. Maj. (Retired) Jack Hardwick served his Nation as a Soldier during war and peace for three decades culminating as the Joint Readiness Training Center, Operations Group command sergeant major. He currently serves as the senior enlisted trainer with the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, La.

